



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia

Library of Virginia & VMFA Announce Winner of Annual Art in Literature Award Gaylord Torrence to be honored at the 2021 Library of Virginia Literary Awards in October

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Richmond, VA – The Library of Virginia and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts are pleased to announce the winner of the annual **Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award**. The judges selected **Gaylord Torrence's** book *Continuum: Native North American Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*. Torrence will be recognized in person on Friday, October 15, 2021, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and on Saturday, October 16, 2021, during the Library of Virginia's annual Literary Awards, to be celebrated virtually this year.

ABOUT THE WORK

This landmark publication brings Indigenous art to the fore with the presentation of 280 objects from the Nelson-Atkins Museum's rich collection. More than two-thirds of the volume's featured masterworks—paintings, sculptures, drawings, regalia, ceramics, textiles, and baskets—have never before appeared in publication. Created by both known and unknown makers, these singular and profound aesthetic achievements represent the traditions of communities across the United States and Canada in a continuum of visual expression from pre-encounter to the present.

Curator Gaylord Torrence traces the evolution of the Nelson-Atkins holdings, which have expanded significantly since 2002. Fundamental concepts for understanding Native art as well as an overview of traditions from across the United States and Canada guide readers through the illustrations. Director emeritus and founding director of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian W. Richard West Jr. (Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma) contributes a compelling essay on the meanings of Native art. A final essay brings forward the voices of 22 of the contemporary artists represented in the collection.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gaylord Torrence is curator emeritus and founding Fred and Virginia Merrill senior curator of American Indian Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. He is also professor emeritus fine arts, Drake University. In his 18-year tenure at the Nelson-Atkins, Torrence built much of the institution's culturally and aesthetically rich American Indian collection and led the creation of its expansive suite of galleries, opened to the public in 2009. Prior to coming to the museum, and for more than 30 years, he headed the studio drawing and Native North American art history programs at Drake University.

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In March 2020, his most recent publication, *Continuum: Native North American Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, was released. The book features 280 objects, the core of the institution's American Indian holdings. In 2018, Torrence curated the first installation of Native American art in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Art of Native America: The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection*.

His prior exhibitions and publications include *The Plains Indians: Artists of Earth and Sky*, organized by Musee de quai Branly, Paris, which toured to both the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2014 and 2015; *The American Indian Parfleche: A Tradition of Abstract Painting*, Des Moines Art Center, 1994; and *Art of the Red Earth People: The Mesquakie of Iowa* (with Robert Hobbs), University of Iowa Museum of Art, 1989. From 1999 to 2003, Torrence served as curatorial consultant for Arts of Diplomacy: Lewis and Clark's Indian Collection, organized by the Peabody Museum, Harvard University. He is currently serving as guest curator for the Heard Museum in Phoenix and as a curatorial consultant.

ABOUT THE AWARD

Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award recognizes an outstanding book published in the previous year that is written primarily in response to a work (or works) of art while also showing the highest literary quality as a creative or scholarly work. Submissions can include works of journalism, poetry, fiction, biography, or history, as well as museum exhibition catalogs. This unique award, established in 2013, is named in honor of Mary Lynn Kotz, author of the award-winning biography *Rauschenberg: A Life*. The inaugural award recipient was *The Innocence of Objects* by Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk. Last year's winner was Philip J. Deloria for his book *Becoming Mary Sully: Toward an American Indian Abstract*, where he explored Sully's stunning portfolio through the lenses of modernism, industrial design, Dakota women's aesthetics, mental health, ethnography and anthropology, primitivism, and the American Indian politics of the 1930s. The Art in Literature Award is presented each year during the annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards celebration weekend.

EVENTS

Tuesday–Thursday, October 12–14, 2021 | Panel Discussions with the Literary Awards Finalists

Free Virtual Events, 6:00–7:30 PM | Online at facebook.com/LibraryofVA or youtube.com/user/LibraryofVa
The finalists for the Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry Awards will discuss their work.

Friday, October 15, 2021 | Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award

In-Person Event, 6:00–7:30 PM | VMFA, 200 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd, Richmond, VA 23220

\$8 (\$5 for Library of Virginia & VMFA members)

Tickets: www.lva.virginia.gov/public/litawards/kotz-register.htm

This event will feature a presentation by the award honoree, Gaylord Torrence, followed by a book signing and reception.

Saturday, October 16, 2021 | Library of Virginia Literary Awards Celebration

Free Virtual Event, 6:00–7:30 PM | Online at facebook.com/LibraryofVA or youtube.com/user/LibraryofVa

The winners of the fiction, nonfiction, and poetry awards—as well as the People's Choice Awards—will be announced on Saturday, October 16, 2021, at the 24th Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards Celebration honoring Virginia authors and friends. The event, sponsored by Dominion Energy, attracts authors, publishers, and those who enjoy the written word. Author Adriana Trigiani will again serve as host for this event.

For more information, please call 804.692.3813 or visit www.lva.virginia.gov/public/litawards.

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ABOUT THE LITERARY AWARDS

In 1997, the Library of Virginia established its annual Literary Awards program to honor Virginia writers and celebrate their contributions to the literary landscape of our state and nation. Given to Virginia authors in the categories of fiction and poetry—and to nonfiction authors for works about a Virginia subject as well—the awards are presented at an annual celebration that has become the Library’s signature event and an eagerly anticipated cultural tradition in Richmond. While the main award recipients are selected by independent panels of judges, the Library also invites book lovers and readers to vote for their favorite works for the People’s Choice Awards for Fiction and Nonfiction. In the past, the Library has also bestowed a Literary Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize the enduring influence of an outstanding Virginia writer, with past winners including Earl Hamner, Lee Smith, Jan Karon, Tom Robbins, Charles Wright, Barbara Kingsolver, Rita Dove, John Grisham, Tom Wolfe, and David Baldacci.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

The Library of Virginia is the state’s oldest institution dedicated to the preservation of Virginia’s history and culture. Our online offerings attract nearly 4 million website visits per year, and our resources, exhibitions, and events bring in more than 100,000 visitors each year. The Library’s collections, containing more than 130 million items, document and illustrate the lives of both famous Virginians and ordinary citizens.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA FOUNDATION

Founded in 1984, the Library of Virginia Foundation supports the Library of Virginia and its mission by raising private financial support, managing its endowment, and overseeing programming that brings Virginia’s history and culture to life.

ABOUT THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

VMFA is a state-supported, privately endowed educational institution created for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, to encourage the study of the arts, and thus to enrich the lives of all.

September 14, 2021